

Written for the Lady's Book.

## THE OLD ENGLISH ESSAYISTS.—No. II.

## THE SPECTATOR.

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THE Spectator followed the Tatler, and was projected jointly by Addison and Steele. In our first number we anticipated, in general remarks on Addison's character as a writer, the question of the merits of the Spectator. It is perhaps the most generally known and popular of all the writings of the Essayists. It was published in the same form as the Tatler, a half sheet of two pages, at the price of a penny. The stamp duty of 1712, raised the price to two-pence. Swift mentions that this duty threw most of the papers of the times into confusion, and exploded some, but the Spectator doubled its price immediately without any diminution of patronage, for a contemporary writer informs us that its sales rose to 14,000 per day; some days they were 20,000.

The first number was issued March 1st, 1710—11. It was written by Addison, and describes the character of the Spectator most admirably. It is an excellent example of the calm humour of its author. It is the portrait of a fine old man, taciturn, but not austere, inclined to credulity, and whose studies were more curious than learned. The sketch is throughout a delicate satire on the egotistical vanity of mankind. The estate to which he was heir had been preserved unaltered in its "very hedges and ditches" from the days of William the Conqueror—a satirical allusion to the habit of sacrificing improvement to a stupid reverence for antiquity. His mother too, we are gravely informed, "dreamed before his birth that he would be a judge," and we are assured that he "threw away his rattle before he was two months old," and "would not use his coral until they had taken away the bells from it." At college he was distinguished by a profound silence, and he does not believe that he ever spoke three sentences together all his life. His taciturnity, however, was construed by his taste into "*solidity which would wear well*." He diligently devoured all books ancient and modern. On the death of his father, he travelled over Europe, and even visited Grand Cairo to get the measurement of a pyramid, on ascertaining which he immediately returned home "with great satisfaction." At London he frequented all the famous resorts, and was taken for a merchant on 'change for more than ten years, and also for "a Jew in the Assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's." He would not have presumed on appearing before the public if his friends had not often assured him that it was a pity so much knowledge as he possessed should be lost to the world. The character of the aged gentleman is well sustained, and the satire smooth but cutting as a razor's edge.

The second paper is by Steele, and contains a description of the imaginary club, by whom the work is supposed to be conducted. We have heretofore mentioned that we are indebted to Steele for the chief *dramatis personæ* of the Spectator, and that even the idea of Sir Roger de Coverly, usually attributed to Addison, originated with him. The proportions and lineaments of the character are fully drawn in this

paper, yet the facility and completeness with which Addison afterwards takes up the idea and extends it through at least fifteen various papers, reflects the highest credit on his pen. Sir Roger is thus introduced by Steele. "The first of our family is a gentleman from Worcestershire, of an ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverly. His great grandfather was inventor of that famous country dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with lowness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes or forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho Square. It is said he is a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman; had often supped with my Lord Rochester, and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry moods, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind, but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house, he calls the servants by names, and talks all the way up stairs to a visit. I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause, by explaining a passage in the game act."

All the elements of this much admired character are contained in this sketch.

Addison in No. 106, describes the household of the knight. He is the more at ease in Sir Roger's family because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care to leave him—by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his valet de chambre for his brother; his butler is gray-

headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that he had ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy counsellor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

He could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics, upon Sir Roger's arrival at his country seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good nature engages every body to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person he diverts himself with; on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

The chief companion of the Spectator, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or in the fields, is a very venerable man who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house, in the character of a chaplain, above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and obliging conversation; he heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependant.

Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of a humourist; and his virtues, as well as imperfections, are tinged by a certain extravagance which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours. "As I was walking," says the Spectator, "with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned? and without staying for my answer, told me that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the University to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon. 'My friend,' says Sir Roger, found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years, and though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time, asked any thing of me for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for something in behalf of one or other of my tenants, his parishioners. There has not been a law-suit in the parish since he has lived among them; if any dispute arises they apply themselves to him for the decision; if they do not acquiesce in his

judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity."

While the knight is proceeding in his description of the chaplain, the venerable gentleman himself appears before them. On Sir Roger's accosting him with "who was to preach the next Sabbath?" he replies, "the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon," at the same time he shows his list for the "whole year," among which are the names of Tillotson, Calamy, Saunderson, and Barrow. The character of the Priest is in striking harmony with that of the knight.

So much for Sir Roger's chaplain. Our readers will be disposed to smile at the qualifications which the good knight considered so indispensable in him. We would not mar the beauty of his well-drawn character, by "odious comparisons," but a divine in this age of improvement, would find his "*calls*" "few and far between," with no other recommendations to public favour than those negative qualities so much insisted upon by Sir Roger de Coverly. The "plain sense, clear voice, good aspect, and sociable temper," are all very well, but the idea of "not much learning," and entertaining a congregation the year round with "all the good sermons which have been printed in English," would, we opine, be matters of question, notwithstanding the "continued system of practical divinity" they might form;—to say nothing of the *eine qua non* accomplishment of *back-gammon*.

In paper 517, Addison records the death of the venerable Sir Roger. We have heretofore mentioned that this event was contrived by Addison, because of the admiration and even love that he had conceived for the fine humour and perfect ideal of this interesting character, which Steele had begun to mar by introducing him in immoral scenes. His end corresponded with the old-fashioned virtue of his life. A letter from his butler describes it. We cannot forbear introducing this pathetic account of the "the melancholy news which afflicted the whole county." Says the letter, "I am afraid he caught his death the last county sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman; for you know, sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom; and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed, we were once in great hope of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life; but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to the lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady, his mother. He has bequeathed the fine white gelding that he used to ride a hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him; and

has left you all his books. He has, moreover, bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement, with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning to every man in the parish a great freize-coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As most of us are grown gray-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church, for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverly church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells every body that he has made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father, Sir Arthur." The butler further remarks, that Captain Lentry, his master's successor, "makes much" of those whom his master loved, and shows great kindness to the old house-dog that "he was so fond of." "It would have gone to your heart" says he "to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire."

"This letter," says the Spectator, "notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it, there was not a dry eye in the club."

Sir Roger de Coverly! peace to his memory, says many a pale-faced student at the mention of his name. Delectable is the recollection of the midnight hours, after the hard and late study of the college domicile, and the days of languishing in the sick chamber, when more arduous thinkings gave way to the benign presence and quaint converse of the bachelor Knight of Worcestershire. "His reasons 'why men of parts alone ought to be hanged'—the famous history of his ancestors—his love for the inexorable widow, and his enumeration of her marvellous qualities—his exploits in fox-hunting—his opinions of merchants—his criticisms on the illustrious dead of Westminster Abbey—how redolent they are of the old sterling humour of other days; how they smack of the ever-blessed times of pure Anglo-Saxon genius and manners, the days of roast-beef and plumb-pudding, when the old English gentleman had not yet lost the individuality of his character, but

— "Had his old estate,  
And kept up his old mansion at a bountiful old rate,  
With a good old porter to relieve the old poor at his gate.  
Whose custom was, when Christmas came to bid his friends  
repair  
To his old hall, where feast and ball for them he did prepare;  
And though the rich he entertained, he ne'er forgot the poor,  
Nor was the houseless wanderer e'er driven from the door  
Of this good old English gentleman, one of the olden times!"

None of the other characters of the Spectator compare with Sir Roger de Coverly, yet they are all more or less excellent. "The gentleman next in esteem," is also a bachelor, a member of the Inner Temple,

of great probity, wit, and understanding. He understands Aristotle and Longinus better than he does Littleton or Coke. His father sends up every post, questions relating to marriage articles, leases, and tenures, all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves, when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of modern cases. No one ever took him for a fool; but none, except his intimate friends know he has a great deal of wit." His turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable. As few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste for books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present times. He is an excellent critic, and "the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New Inn, crosses through Russell court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins;" "he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rade." It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

Sir Andrew Freeport is a merchant of great eminence in London; a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, "and (as every rich man has usually some slight way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea, the British common." He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and asserts that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry.

He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is "A penny saved is a penny got."

Captain Lentry is likewise a member of the club, a gentleman of great valour and good understanding, but marvellous modesty; he "deserves very well, but is awkward of putting his talent within the observation of those who should take notice of them." He was captain some years, behaved with great gallantry on sundry occasions, but having a small estate, and being heir to Sir Roger de Coverly, has quitted his military life. He is very frank, no sourness is found in his remarks, and he is the very soul of candour. His military life has furnished him with many anecdotes and adventures which amuse much the club, "for he is never overbearing though accustomed to command, and never obsequious, though he once obeyed men who were above him."

Will Honeycomb comes next, the very impersonation of gallantry. He is a gentleman, who, according to his years, should be in the decline of life; but having "ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but a very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces on his brain." His person is well turned, and of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can

smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. "He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you, from which of the French king's wenches, our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge have been in the female world." "As other men of his age will take notice to you, what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he will tell you when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance, or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such-a-one. This way of talking of his, very much enlivens the conversation amongst us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him, as of that sort of man, who is usually called a well-bred, fine gentleman"—a satirical picture not inapplicable to the "fine gentleman" of later times.

The last of this list of worthies is a clergyman, who visits the company very seldom. He is very philosophical, has great learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. "He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are all so far gone in years, that he shows when he is among us, an earnestness to have us fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interest in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities!"

Many other *dramatis personæ* are met with in the pages of the Spectator. Will Wimble is among the most interesting. The idea is Addison's. He gives the character with remarkable completeness in very few words, which he puts in the form of a letter from Will to Sir Roger. "I desire you to accept of a jack, which is the best I have caught this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and see how the perch bite in the black river. I observed with some concern, the last time I saw you upon the bowling-green, that your whip wanted a lash to it: I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the country. I have not been out of the saddle for six days last past, having been at Eton with John's eldest son. He takes to his learning hugely."

Here we see the veritable Will, not as in a mirror but face to face. Will Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and "descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles." He is between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business, and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well used in all the little handicrafts of an idle man. He makes "a May fly to a miracle;" and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a "good-natured, officious

fellow," and very much esteemed upon account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries "a tulip-root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the country." Will is a particular favourite of all the young heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a net that he has woven or a setting-dog that he has trained himself. He now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by inquiring as often as he meets them "how they wear!" These gentleman-like manufactures and obliging little humours, make Will the darling of the country.

This well-drawn character is not without its moral. "Will Wimble's is the case of many a younger brother of a great family who had rather see their children starve like gentlemen, than thrive in a trade, or profession that is beneath their quality!" A more pungent satire on the wretched effects of the system of primogeniture could not be written.

Having heretofore discussed the general merits of the Spectator, we need say but little more. As a model of style it is considered first in our language. Its study in this respect would be of no little advantage at this time, when the perspicuity and smooth elegance of our old classics are disappearing before the bombast, inverted construction, and straining for effect, which the unnatural popularity of a foreign and fermented literature has produced among us. Johnson said that any one who would become a master of English style, must spend his days and nights in the study of Addison. It is favourably adopted as a model of style, by the general interest of its subjects; the student can never tire over these vivacious pages, and his pleasure will render easy the acquisition of a diction, which, from its being the natural style of the tongue, is, of itself, more readily acquired than any other.

The humour of Addison has always been commended without reserve. It is tranquil and refined. It is altogether intellectual, unperverted by the grossness of mere animal exhilaration. It is consistent with the highest moral sobriety. Beattie observes of Sir Roger de Coverly that "we always smile, but never laugh at him." Excepting Will Honeycomb, all the characters of the club are similar to Sir Roger. Each is well discriminated, but they all have one point in common, the ground of their common friendship, the secret of their congeniality of temper, and that is the free, but calm good humour of each. The moral tone of the Spectator is high. Many of its papers are devoted to religious topics. Not a few of the numbers on moral subjects are alike profound in their reflections and elegant in their style. It was Addison's design in projecting the Spectator, to refute a common impression of his day that "wit and impiety, talents and vice were inseparable."

The name of Addison has become almost a synonym for every grace of the mind, and every excellency of the heart. The combination of so much genius with so much virtue is rare, it is rare in this day of the acknowledged triumph of religious principles; its singularity in his age is infinitely more remarkable. "If any judgment be made of his moral character," says Johnson, "from his books, nothing will be found but purity and excellence. It is reasonable to believe



that Addison's professions and practice were at no great variance, since amidst that storm of faction in which most of his life was spent, though his station made him conspicuous and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies; of those with whom interest and opinion united him, he had not only the esteem but the kindness; and of others whom the violence of opposition drove against him, though he might lose the love, he retained the reverence."

Addison was born in 1671. His father was a clergyman and no doubt his early training produced that virtuous bias which marked his whole life and has shed a moral radiance over all his writings. He always had a strong predilection for the church, but was deterred from taking orders by an unconquerable diffidence. He pursued his studies first at the Charter House School, in London, an institution venerable in the biographical history of English literature. It was here that he became acquainted with Steele, who was his intimate associate in the best literary labours of his life. Addison assisted Steele by some valuable papers in the *Tatler*, they jointly conducted the *Spectator* and *Guardian*, and were fast friends until the acrimony of political feeling dissolved a fellowship which had been endeared by a close congeniality of literary habits and matured through years of familiar intercourse.

At the Charter House and at Oxford, Addison devoted himself to classical studies, especially the Latin poets. His *Musæ Anglicanæ* was his first work—it is distinguished by the peculiar excellencies of his own mind. He sent a copy of it to Boileau, who, it is said, had, until its reception, entertained a contemptuous opinion of the poetical powers of the English.

A poem on one of the campaigns of the day, attracted to him the attention of the Court, and though no office was offered by the government, a pension of three hundred pounds a year was settled upon him by the crown, through the influence of Lord Somers, by which he was enabled to travel in France and Italy. It was during this tour that he wrote his *Dialogues on Medals*, and a considerable part of his *Cato*. He returned home in want, his pension having been suspended by the removal of his friends from power. His travels, which were soon after published, are devoted almost entirely to the topographical illustration of the Latin poets, and a comparison of the modern aspects of the country with their descriptions.

A poetical piece procured him again the patronage of the government, and he was appointed Commissioner of Appeals; in two years he became Under Secretary of State, and subsequently accompanied to Ireland, as Secretary, the Lord Lieutenant; having at the same time a nominal office, with a salary of three hundred pounds a year. It was during his stay in Ireland, that his old friend Steele, started the *Tatler*. Steele attempted to write secretly, but Addison detected him by the appearance of an observation on Virgil, which the latter remembered to have communicated to him. In about a month afterwards Addison's first article was published in the *Tatler*.

But a couple of months had elapsed after the cessation of the *Tatler*, when the *Spectator* made its appearance. The commencement of this paper, with so ample a plan, after the discussion of almost every subject of manners and light literature in the *Tatler*, shows a remarkable confidence and boldness in the

writers, but the eminent success of the attempt fully justified their courage. The conductors were not a little influenced by the party excitements of the day, and some of the earlier papers savour of their politics. It is said that a hearty whig preface, prefixed by Dr. Fleetwood to a volume of sermons, was inserted that it might be read by the Queen, who had the *Spectator* brought in regularly with her breakfast, and that the paper of that day was not published till twelve o'clock, (her breakfast hour,) in order that no time should be allowed to those about her to examine it, before it should be presented.

His next work was the tragedy of *Cato*. It was acted in 1713, with great *éclat*. The political spirit of the times dictated the popular judgment of the stage, and this fact unquestionably gave to the *Cato* its splendid triumph. Says Johnson, "The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories, and the Tories echoed every clap to show that the satire was unfelt." Sustained thus by a clamorous spirit, entirely uncongenial with just criticism, it was acted night after night, a greater number of times than had been the lot of any drama before on the London stage. Though this celebrated tragedy has been justly called "the most splendid of his works" yet as a drama it is seriously defective. "It is rather a poem in dialogue than a tragedy," it wants the verisimilitude in its characters and that power of exciting solicitude, growing in intensity as the scenes revolve and consummating instead of evanescent in the denouement, which form the effective excellence of tragedy. Its popularity was, however, boundless, the Queen even sent a request that it might be dedicated to her, and it raised the author's fame at once to its acme. Its success on the stage was no doubt owing in a great measure to its reception the first night, when Steele, as he acknowledged himself, "packed the audience" for the purpose.

At the same time the *Guardian* was started, which will come under review hereafter. Subsequently the *Spectator* was revived, but owing to the civil tumults of the times, with little success. Addison wrote more than a fourth of the papers which are distinguished by a larger proportion of religious subjects than any he had before written. The *Freeholder* was commenced in 1715. Though devoted to politics, it is adorned with many instances of his elegant humour, and is celebrated particularly for the fine character of the Tory Fox-hunter, perhaps not inferior to Roger de Coverly. "Bigotry itself," says Johnson, "must be delighted with it."

The next year occurred his marriage with the Countess of Warwick, perhaps the most unhappy event of his life. He had been tutor to her son, and it was after a long courtship that he obtained her hand; the disproportion of their rank had its usual effect, and Addison's last years, we have reason to believe, were embittered by the worst of human afflictions.

In 1717 he was elevated to the dignity of Secretary of State. He found himself entirely unfit for this station, being too diffident to defend the Government in the House of Commons, and, says Pope, "too fastidious in the use of fine expressions to issue with expedition the ordinary orders of his office." He retired with a pension of three hundred pounds. He devoted the remainder of his life to literary pleasures and labours. One of these, which was published after his decease, was a *Defence of Christianity*; it was not completed according to his original design. It is

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painful to record that the tranquillity of his closing days was interrupted by the political controversy which has been referred to, and which dissolved the cordial friendship that had so long bound him to his literary co-labourer, Steele.

He died 1719, of asthma and dropsy. He called Lord Warwick, a profligate young nobleman, to his bedside, and said, "I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die?" The virtues which had adorned his life and chastened his genius, shed their mild lustre on his final hours, and he sinks from our view more amiable, more admired than he appears to our contemplation, when conversing with

him, through the beautiful, the refined productions of his pen.

Chesterfield said, that "he was the most timorous and awkward man that he ever saw." Pope declares his conversation had "something in it more charming than I have found in any other man. But this was only when he was familiar; before strangers, or perhaps a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence." It was his extreme diffidence that interfered with his success in office, yet it gave him an air of amiability which won the esteem even of his enemies. Swift said, that "if he had asked for the crown it would have been given him without opposition."

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